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BOOK REVIEWS

Special Method in Reading in the Grades. Including the Oral Treatment of Stories and the Reading of Classics. By CHARLES A. McMURRAY. New York: Macmillan. Pp. 351. \$1.25.

This book is a combination of two earlier volumes both of which deal with special method in reading. These earlier volumes—*The Special Method in Primary Reading and Oral Work with Stories* and *The Special Method in the Reading of English Classics*—appear in this new form with but few changes.

In the present form the book will be found to contain in the main three lines of treatment of the subject. In the first place, it is a plea for the teaching of reading in all grades for the sake of its content. Secondly, several chapters are devoted to a consideration of the technique of teaching reading to beginners; and thirdly, the book contains a course of study in reading for each of the grades together with illustrative lessons.

The earlier part of the book lays great stress on the importance of oral work as a preparation for learning to read, and as supplementary to the regular work in reading, especially in the earlier years. Such a method of procedure is based upon the view that it is much more important for a child to acquire a taste for good books than to meet the purely formal requirements of learning to read. Furthermore, even apart from his inability to read, the appeal to the young child through language appears to be stronger when by the medium of the sense of hearing than sight. A number of useful hints to teachers for the acquisition of skill in the oral presentation of stories are given.

The sentence, word, and phonic methods in alternation are recommended for teaching reading to beginners. Some details are given by the author as to how these methods may suitably be applied at different times, but the main point insisted on here is that the reading material should be interesting in content. To this end it should preferably be connected with stories already made familiar to the children in oral form.

One can object to this great emphasis on the importance of content which is the keynote of the book, only when it leads to a corresponding neglect of drill and analysis. The apparently growing number of children in the schools who read incorrectly because the words are apprehended by a process little better than guess work, shows that there is a tendency to go to extremes in this respect.

The bibliographical material of the book is extensive and valuable. A number of illustrative lessons are given and suggestions for the treatment of certain typical stories and phases of literature suitable for the various grades.

Book of Alphabets. For Use in Schools. By H. W. SHAYLOR. Boston: Ginn & Co. Pp. 24. \$0.10.

This book is essentially a copy-book designed for practice in lettering. A variety of standard alphabets are presented—Roman forms, French script, Gothic, outline, italic, Lombardic, simple, plain, and skeleton letters, etc. These